2026 TOWN ELECTIONS

For Planning Board: Amy Beliveau

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Candidate questions

What experiences and perspectives would you contribute to the Planning Board? I believe that Winchester can, and should, grow

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balanced and thoughtful way, and I would bring to the board the right blend of skills to support that overarching vision: over a decade of experience in development, design and negotiation, as well as a broad understanding of Winchester's town government through my service on Town Meeting, the EFPBC, and the State of the Town Committee.

What I can bring to the Planning Board table specifically is real life experience from the world of real estate and development, an understanding of what it takes to bring a project from conception to certificate of occupancy and a strong understanding of the financials involved and what levers the Town can pull to create value and achieve its objectives. I am a data-driven decision maker who believes collaboration between developers on one hand and design experts, architectural historians, and the Town officials charged with interpreting the Zoning Bylaw on the other hand will allow Winchester to grow in a way that honors the Town's history and goals.

What are two or three issues facing Winchester, related to Town planning, that you think are most important and what are your positions on them?

1. Winchester needs to identify its long-term growth goals and then ensure the Zoning Bylaw creates a pathway to achieving those goals. This will be achieved through an updated Master Plan (which is currently set to expire in 2030) and updates to the Zoning Bylaw to support the new Master Plan, both of which are now included in the State of the Town's financial plan. I also believe Winchester needs to include professional guidance from a preservation and architectural standpoint that will complement the advice provided by the Design Review Committee and Historical Commission volunteers—having this high-quality input will allow the Town to bring forward projects that achieve our growth objectives and that are design-centric and in keeping with the Town's charm and character.

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2. Winchester needs more housing, specifically housing that offers current and future residents a wider breath of options. As a community that is more than two-thirds single family homes, we lack meaningful housing diversity. This includes affordable housing, but also market rate properties, particularly for seniors and empty nesters looking to downsize while remaining in Town. I think there are many ways to achieve housing diversity, and Winchester will need to get creative in our approach to closing the gap. For example, we could update the Zoning Bylaw to allow for "gently" increased density on single-family zoned lots so long as the exterior structure of the property remains unchanged. We could also look to update the Zoning Bylaw in transit-rich parts of Town to allow for higher density, while ensuring that the aesthetic of those properties align to the goals of the Town. Many of our peers are doing creative work and thinking to achieve thoughtful growth and I believe Winchester can do the same.

Please comment on the pros and cons of new development that includes mixed use and affordable/low income housing. I don't necessarily believe that new development truly has pros and cons, but rather opportunities and risks. New development should mean creating not only more housing, but diverse housing for people in all stages of life. Mixed use new development will attract new business to Town which will enhance the lives of residents and visitors while generating revenue the Town needs.

New development in affordable housing means opening our community to those who would not otherwise have been able to be neighbors and welcoming people of all different backgrounds to the community. The most important risk to manage when it comes to new development is striking the balance between what is new while preserving what is historic. Winchester is a quintessential New England town and a great deal of its livability is based on its historic charm. New development, if done without thought and care, can run the risk of altering the character of the community. But it does not have to if we have a thoughtful and ri way of reviewing projects with expert advice.

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What predominant factor would lead you to support or oppose mixed use and affordable/low income housing? I would truly hate to see a development, or even single-family homes, built in Winchester that are greatly out of place with the Town's architectural character. I think that single-family neighborhoods are equally at risk of this if existing structures are continuously demolished in favor of brand-new construction homes that maximize the FAR and setbacks.

I believe each proposal, each parcel, each piece of land is unique, and we need to be diligent in the design review process to ensure that we balance aesthetics with expanding our housing production. I do not believe that pro-housing, pro-growth, and historical preservation are truly in tension. If a project or proposal did not strike the right balance or help us achieve the goals in the Housing Production Plan or Master Plan, then I would be opposed.

In the right parts of Town, notably Main Street and the Central Business District, we should be pushing for mixed use development to grow our housing and commercial base. Residents benefit from a wider breadth of businesses, which also increase our Town's vitality. We should be thinking about the businesses we have now, what we are missing, and what our residents want. I have heard a running joke that anyone who wants to build something in Winchester should just propose a taco shop on the ground floor and their project will fly through the approvals. While the comment is made in jest, it speaks to the broader truth that our ground-floor commercial spaces are precious and the Town should do everything it can to bring residents the amenities they would like to see.

Affordable housing also needs to remain a priority. We are not yet at the state-mandated "safe harbor" level of 10% affordable, and we need to make progress toward that standard. Winchester is a wonderful commu
we need to do our part to welcome people from all walks of life.

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Why should voters elect you to the Planning Board? Voters should elect me to the Planning Board because of the perspective and experience I can bring to the Board. I want to encourage development that features high-quality, design centric and historically appropriate architecture, develop housing of all types, from market rate to affordable, and focus on mixed use / commercial and light industrial where possible. By electing me to the Planning Board, voters are adding someone who will put in the work and apply their industry and Town experience to ensure the Town's goals are met and its values are honored.

How would you like voters to contact you? Please reach via the Contact form on my website: beliveauforplanningboard.com

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13 YEARS OF DATA, ONE SATURDAY: Takeaways from Winchester's override vote and the races that surrounded it

Winchester News reviewed precinct-level election results from every annual town election since 2014 — 13 year
covering turnout, ballot qu
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them against the March 21 preliminary numbers. The 2026 results have not yet been certified by Town

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NEWS

With override rejected, Winchester shifts from campaigning to budget planning

After Winchester voters rejected an $11.5 million Proposition 2 1/2 override on Election Day, March 21, the governing question in town has shifted from persuasion to arithmetic. Select Board member Bill McGonigle, who served on the Yes for Winchester campaign, said the defeat has changed how he approaches

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NEWS

Voters fill Town Meeting seats across Winchester; four incumbents unseated

The biggest shakeup came in Precinct 7, where two officeholders lost in an 11-person contest, matching Precinct 4 for the busiest race.

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NEWS

Winchester ZBA waives town regulations to move Washington/Swanton project along

Town officials have approved waivers of regulations for a residential/commercial development project at Washington and Swanton streets. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 19 approved the waivers for a 40B project at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St. in a special meeting preceding a

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He won all eight precincts after a door-to-door campaign that emphasized direct voter contact over institutional backing.

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EVENTS

Network for Social Justice to celebrate 35th anniversary

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Network For Social

EVENTS

Winchester Community Music School presents Jazz

The following was submitted by the Winchester Community Music School: On

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Justice turns 35 this spring! There will be a celebration on Saturday, April 11, from 7-9:30 p.m., at the Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St., Winchester. Connect with your local friends and neighbors as

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Saturday, March 28, join the community at Winchester Community Music School, 407 Highland Ave., for a Jazz Jam Session, an afternoon of fun, spontaneous jazz playing, beginning at 3 p.m. Instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels are

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